

GAZEBO EXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • DECEMBER 2019

IT'S BEEN A BANNER YEAR FOR HIGHLAND

When Highland welcomed New Years 2019, President Steve Wagner said the town council would focus on economic expansion, quality of life enhancements and public safety. From burgeoning development along Main Street to the promise of big changes on the north side, here's a look at their accomplishments:



ENHANCING DOWNTOWN

Entrepreneurs and restauranteurs made their mark on downtown. While the Rosignol family transformed the landmark Hoosier Highlander, the Foreits began work on a free-standing location for Maria's Buena Cocina and newcomer The Counter, a summer favorite. Enhancements continued as a new community garden took root just east of the fire station followed by ADA-accessible walkways and new crossings. Councilman Bernie Zemen encourages everyone to stay tuned. More downtown development is on its way. 🐾

SAVING FOR A RAINY DAY

A council decision to build up cash reserves as good stewards of public funds — and in anticipation of a new state law — paid off. Clerk-Treasurer Michael Griffin's Treasury Talks — three public forums that took place this summer — set the stage for possible changes in the way government pays for, and provides, goods and services. Leaders are looking for efficiencies in bulk purchasing and partnering with other communities to provide services beyond municipal borders. 🐾

IMPROVING PUBLIC SPACES

Children of all abilities and ages can now soar and climb on playground equipment at Main Square, Sheppard and Fletcher parks thanks to new ADA-accessible swings and slides. And, oh the trees, trees, trees! Park Superintendent Alex Brown made the best of a NIPSCO policy impacting trees on the bike path while the Tree Advisory Board increased the canopy in parkways and around town. 🐾

STRETCHING ROAD DOLLARS

If it seems some of the roads around town are easier to travel, you're not mistaken. The Highland Town Council doubled the impact of a \$900,000 investment to repave Highway Avenue and Jewett Street while tackling improvements to the long-awaited LaPorte Street project. Council President Steve Wagner lauded Public Works Director John Bach for maximizing the Community Crossings Matching Grant Program. "John has been smart about tapping into the road project funding since the state program began in 2016," Wagner said. "We were able to maximize every dollar, completing \$1.8 million in roadwork for just \$900,000." 🐾

KEEPING HIGHLAND SAFE

Beginning the year with crime stats that were the lowest in 50 years, Highland Police continued to employ technology as a crime-fighting tool. The result: a second surveillance camera near Wicker Memorial Park. The surveillance cameras have already proven their worth by yielding vital clues. Other programs of note: the PAARI program that assists those addicted to drugs get the help they need and Autism Awareness among first responders. Speaking of something to rave about ... Highland was also one of the first police departments to switch over to the RAVE notification system, part of Lake County's Smart911 program. In addition to alerts, the new platform allows users to tailor information for first responders. 🐾

ACADEMY REGISTRATION



Deadline to sign up for the 2020 Citizens Police Academy is **DECEMBER 13**. The class meets weekly from January through April and offers an inside look at the department that serves them.

APPLICATIONS: Available at Highland Police Department or online at highlandpolice.com.

HOLIDAY TRASH PICK-UP

Highland residents are reminded that trash and recyclables will be collected on our regularly scheduled Tuesdays during the holidays. Christmas week collection will be Tuesday, Dec 24. New Year's Day week collection will be Tuesday, December 31.



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NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

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The Gazebo Express is produced by:
The Idea Factory • (219) 779-9041
www.theideafactory.us.com

Printed by Lithographic Communications
9701 Indiana Parkway, Munster, IN 46321

LONGTIME HIGHLAND EXECUTIVE TAPPED TO LEAD REGION'S LARGEST FOOD BANK

Victor Garcia is in the business of change.

As the new executive director of the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana, the longtime Highland resident and school board member is already working to find resources to up the amount of donated food available and creating opportunities to transform the status of thousands.

"Statistics in Lake and Porter counties are shocking," he said. "As part of Feeding America, we provide 4.5 million meals each year. With 100,000 individuals – one in six people in the region – who are food insecure, we are looking to increase that number exponentially."

From a 72,000-square-foot warehouse in Merrillville, Garcia is dreaming big. Plans are in the works for a community-sized kitchen that does double-duty for residents with a hankering to learn culinary arts. The Broadway location will also support a community cafe while open land serves as a community garden.

"My background is transformational change," Garcia said. "That's our plan here – growing to meet the community need with measurable, sustainable programs." 🌱



HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Food Bank of Northwest Indiana has been leading Northwest Indiana's fight against hunger since 1982 and distributes more than 4.5 million meals each year to children, adults and seniors in need.

You can help by volunteering at the food bank, donating food, hosting a food drive or simply making a monetary donation.

Make your check payable and mail to:

Food Bank of Northwest Indiana
6490 Broadway, Merrillville, IN 46410

Please call (219) 980-1777, ext. 311, to charge your gift by phone, or visit www.foodbanknwi.org to make a gift online.

SNOW RULES KEEP OUR STREETS SAFE

With winter already logging two very noticeable appearances – the first as a Halloween trick – Highland Public Works is primed and ready to get the white stuff off roadways in a hurry.

Operation Snow begins with a brine applied to major roads when snow or ice is predicted, followed by salt in the early hours of a storm.

Snow plows pick up where salting ends, beginning with the the most heavily traveled roads, including major thoroughfares and snow routes. When those roads are passable, plow drivers begin a massive attack on residential streets.

Just like seasons for changing out smoke detectors, Public Works Director John Bach said this is a perfect time to revisit town regulations for snow parking and removal.

"Town laws were created to help plows clear streets more quickly and keep motorists safer," Bach said. "We count on our residents to help us do our jobs." 🌨️



SNOW REMINDERS

SNOW PARKING BAN: All on-street parking is banned whenever there is more than one inch of new-fallen snow. This allows snow plows to do their jobs in the first critical hours after a snowfall.

SNOW REMOVAL: The Highland noise ordinance bans the use of snowblowers and snowplows in residential neighborhoods between midnight and 6 a.m. If you contract for snow removal, please ask the company to schedule your service between 6 a.m. and midnight to avoid disturbing neighbors.

FITNESS

**Commit to a healthier 2020!
Join Lincoln Community Fitness Center
and start working on a better you!**

PERSONAL TRAINING

Commit to fitness with a personal trainer. Get one-on-one attention with the New Client Special: three personal training sessions for \$109.

FAMILY YOGA

Check out our new family yoga class – a great opportunity for parents and children (ages 5 and older) to connect. This fun, zen class incorporates breathing exercises, partner poses, chants, meditations, games, crafts and relaxation. Fee applies.

5:30-6:25 p.m. Wednesdays
Beginning January 8

SILVER SNEAKERS

Lincoln Fitness Center is an official location for SilverSneakers, the nation's leading fully-funded Medicare exercise program for adults 65 and older. If you have a SilverSneakers membership, you are eligible for a pass to our fitness center and these classes:

- SilverSneakers Classic
- SilverSneakers Yoga
- SilverSneakers BOOM

To see if you qualify or to register, visit silversneakers.com.

INFO: Call (219) 838-0114 or visit us online at highlandparks.org.

NEW
CLASS



HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

At this time of year, the Highland Police Department adds staffing to patrol neighborhoods and businesses to thwart both daytime burglaries and package thefts. Police Chief Pete Hojnicky says there are things each of us can do to protect ourselves and our property during the holidays:

- * Keep doors locked and valuables out of plain view.
- * Make arrangements for a trusted neighbor or relative to pick-up or take delivery of mailed packages.
- * Leave both outside and inside lights on after dark.
- * Beware of phone scams seeking personal information.
- * Be aware of scams where subjects come to your door representing a town entity to gain entry and ransack your home. Remember: You don't have to open your door to anyone you don't know!

IF YOU ARE LEAVING TOWN ...

- * Contact police at (219) 838-3184 to place your residence on a vacation checklist. Highland VIPs will physically check the security of your home while you are away.
- * Put lights/radios/TVs on timers when gone for an extended time.
- * Make arrangements for your mail and newspapers to be picked up.
- * Have someone you trust shovel your driveway and walkways.
- * Take in your trash cans.
- * Ask a trusted neighbor or relative to check your house.

IF YOU ARE SHOPPING ...

- * Shop with friends or family.
- * Do not carry large sums of money or all of your credit cards. Carry only what you need on your person.
- * Park in a well-lit area.
- * Lock your vehicle.
- * Store valuables in the trunk.
- * Avoid carrying purses.
- * Be aware of your surroundings.

REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

Residents are asked to immediately report suspicious people, behavior or vehicles to police by calling 911.

JUNIOR PAINT WORKSHOPS

Trained Instructor Renee Reiff will guide youth - ages 7 through 12 - step-by-step as they paint their own 12" x 12" canvas. No experience required for this fun class.

WHEN: 5-6:30 p.m. Thursdays, **DEC. 12** (Narwhal) and **JAN. 16** (Northern Lights).

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$15 residents / \$18 nonresidents

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114

CANVAS PAINT WORKSHOPS

Created for painters 13 and older, Instructor Renee Reiff will show students how to paint their own 16" x 20" canvas. Learn the techniques while having fun.

WHEN: 6:30-9 p.m. Thursdays, **DEC. 12**

(Elf Theme) and **JAN. 16** (Northern Lights).

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$25 residents / \$30 nonresidents

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114

YOUTH DANCE CLASSES

Register by **DECEMBER 11** for classes that begin in January. Dancers ages 3-18 are invited to sign up for pre-dance, musical theater, ballet and jazz.

WHEN: Monday, Tuesdays or Saturdays

JANUARY 4-MAY 5 with a seasonal showcase on Friday, **MAY 8**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$130-\$160 depending on residency and class, plus \$45 showcase costume fee

INFO: highlandparks.org or 219.838.0114

FRED'S ART FOR KIDS

Artists ages 10-16 learn the various techniques of cartooning, acrylic painting and more through drawing, colored pencil, pen and ink. Students required to purchase supplies. Details at first class.

WHEN: 4:30 p.m. Fridays, **DEC. 20-JAN. 24**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$36 residents/ \$41 nonresidents.

INFO: highlandparks.org or 219.838.0114

PIANO LESSONS

This course will teach budding musicians - ages 8 and older - how to play an electronic keyboard as well as read music, play songs and basic chords.

WHEN: Tuesdays, **JAN. 28-MARCH 17**

BEGINNERS: 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

INTERMEDIATE: 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

FEE: \$80 residents / \$85 nonresidents

MATERIALS: \$10 for music book and \$3 per week for keyboard rental.

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

INFO: highlandparks.org or 219.838.0114



NEW YEAR'S EVE FIREWORKS SPECTACULAR

Ring in the new year with a fireworks display at Main Square Park. Bring the family to enjoy the midnight show and fireworks spectacular. Hot chocolate will be served.

WHEN: Midnight December 31

WHERE: Main Square Park

ANNUAL TWELFTH NIGHT CELEBRATION

The Holiday Festival of Lights will close with a Twelfth Night celebration. Bring your Christmas trees to Main Square to light up the night. Hot chocolate will be served to warm your hearts and toes.

WHEN: 6 p.m. January 6

WHERE: Main Square Park

COMMUNITY BAND CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Enjoy the sounds of the season at the Highland Community Band's annual Christmas concert.

WHEN: 7 p.m. December 19

WHERE: Highland High School Monbeck Auditorium

JOIN US! Highland's very own community band rehearses at 7 p.m. Wednesdays in the band room at Highland Middle School. To join, email Director Greg Jasek at maestroflute@att.net.

INFORMATION

Call (219) 838-0114 or visit www.highlandparks.org.